

WEEKLY DENTAL UPDATE



SPECIAL EDITION

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Passing of a Shipmate

PASSING OF CAPT GENE “SKIP” KOHLER, DC, USN (Ret)



Shipmates, it is with deep regret that I inform you of the passing of **Captain Gene “Skip” Kohler, DC, USN (Ret)**.

Gene “Skip” Kohler, age 73, passed away peacefully on November 26, 2023, surrounded by loved ones in Annapolis, MD, after a battle with prostate cancer. He retired as a Navy Dentist (Oral Surgeon) in 2000 from the Naval Academy.

He loved the Navy and the Dental Corps.

His obituary is linked below:

https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/annapolis-md/gene-skip-kohler-11556229?utm_source=obit_alerts&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=obit_detail&utm_content=view_updates_button

Skip was born on February 14th, 1950, in Van Nuys, California, to Eugene and Andrea (Michaels) Kohler. He grew up on a small ranch with his brother Gary in the home that his father built. Skip spent his childhood riding horses through the San Fernando Valley, shaping and riding surfboards, sailing to Catalina Island, and playing football. He was the team captain of his football team and graduated as the valedictorian of his class at Notre Dame High School.

While in high school, Skip was drawn to the TV show “Annapolis” leading him to apply and eventually attend the United States Naval Academy. He started the Academy in June 1968, for what he called the “last real plebe summer” at the Academy. During his four years at the Academy, he played center on the Sprint Football team and served as the team’s captain. Skip earned his jump wings and was a member of the USNA parachute club. His brother Gary would follow him to the Academy two years later and be his football teammate. At the Academy, Skip majored in Operations Analysis and commissioned in 1972 as a Surface Warfare Officer in the United States Navy.

After graduation, he checked on board the USS Ramsey. During his tour, he deployed to the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of Vietnam, providing surface fire support to US and Republic of Vietnam forces ashore. At the end of his tour, he left the Ramsey to join a patrol boat squadron in San Diego, serving as the Operations Officer and Officer-in-Charge. During this tour, Skip met a young Navy Nurse who was taking care of his roommate at Long Beach Naval Hospital. They would eventually fall in love and marry in July 1975.

After eight years as a Surface Warfare Officer, Skip made started his journey to become a dental officer. In 1978, he began dental school at the University of Pittsburgh. In between classes and study sessions in Pittsburgh, Skip guided whitewater rafting groups down the Youghiogeny River, learned gunsmithing at a local community college, and built his own Kentucky flintlock rifle by hand.

Skip and Amy gave birth to their first son, Michael, in 1982, shortly before returning to San Diego to serve as a Dental officer on the USS New Orleans. In 1986 Amy gave birth to Andrew followed closely by Jon in 1988 before leaving San Diego to their next station at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Finding time between his dental officer duties with the Marines, Skip instructed SCUBA diving, certified specialized rescue divers, and served as the base’s dive club president. He enjoyed cycling, often going on 30-mile rides during his lunch break, eventually completing a grueling a 136-mile perimeter ride of Oahu.

During his tour in Hawaii, Skip left his family to deploy to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield. After selection to the Navy’s Oral Surgery program, Skip transfer to Oakland Naval Hospital and subsequently Portsmouth Naval Hospital to complete his residency. In 1997, Skip was ordered back to Annapolis where he would serve out the remainder of his career at the Naval Academy Dental Clinic, supporting midshipmen who were in the same place as he had been more than 30 years prior. After 32 years of service, he retired as a Captain in the United States Navy and entered into private practice.

After five years of working in private practice, Skip eventually started his own practice, Annapolis Oral Surgery. During the more than a decade that Skip owned and operated his own practice, he prided himself on being a “country doctor in the city” who truly wanted to know each and every patient he treated prioritizing his patients over profits. Skip was an avid outdoorsman who loved hunting and fishing, especially with his kids. He would go on to sell his business to fully care for Amy during her own fight with cancer. Amy passed in 2017, and although she left a hole in his heart that he would never fill, Skip reconnected with old friends and enjoyed his last few years. Skip surrounded himself with people he loved and prided himself on being an important part of his grandchildren’s lives. “Paw,” as Grandpa Skip was known, welcomed his seventh grandchild to the family, River, in September.

Skip was fervently patriotic, loved learning about history, and always enjoyed his time outdoors hunting, fishing, and boating. Skip was a man who could find great joy in the beauty of a simple moment shared with those he loved. He was deeply proud of his children and grandchildren. Skip lived a life defined by faith, service, and generosity. He will be greatly missed.

Skip is preceded in death by his father Eugene, his mother Andrea, and his wife Amy. He is survived by his children Michael (Gabrielle), Andrew (Jeannine), and Jonathan (Hailey). He leaves behind his seven grandchildren

Lucas, Logan, Haddie Grace, Jamie, River, Jack, and Kai. He also leaves behind his brother Gary and his two nieces, Kathleen and Bella.

A Mass of Christian burial was held on January 19, 2024, at 10:30 AM at the Naval Academy Chapel. The mass was followed immediately by an inurnment ceremony at the Naval Academy Columbarium and then a reception at the Officers' Club. Online condolences can be made at www.johnmtaylorfuneralhome.com.

Rest in Peace Captain Kohler

W. D. Brafford
RDML, DC, USN
Chief, Navy Dental Corps